

Virginia Guide By Your Side

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) Guide By Your Side (GBYS) Program offers parent to parent support to families of children who have been diagnosed as deaf or hard of hearing. The role of the Family Guide is to provide timely, unbiased, and complete information regarding

- Communication options
- Available resources
- Emotional support, and
- Timely referral to Part C Early Intervention services.

Many parents report that soon after they receive the diagnosis of their child's hearing loss, they want to talk with another parent who has been through the same experience, get more information about their options, and learn about agencies and resources that can help. Virginia GBYS has been designed to meet these needs.

The Virginia GBYS Program is managed via a contract between VDH and the Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University. Funding for this program comes from a three-year federal Health Resources and Services Administration grant awarded to VDH in 2005. Beginning in January 2007, guides will be available to families in Virginia.

Families may contact the Virginia GBYS Program through Ruth Frierson at ruth.frierson@vdh.virginia.gov or (866) 493-1090 (toll free). Or families may contact the GBYS Program office at (804) 828-1365. TTY users dial 711 for VA Relay.

Any parent of a child with hearing loss who is interested in applying to be a Family Guide may contact Ruth Frierson.